

NoteBox

For the Sharp Zaurus

Usage Manual

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Installation

The installation method described requires the following:

- A Sharp Zaurus (obviously)
- A Compact Flash card or a Secure Digital card (if you don't have one now, you should get one anyway!)
- A Compact Flash card reader or Secure Digital card reader that will allow you to access a card from your workstation PC (ditto above)
- The NoteBox installation package, called *notebox.ipk*

The installation method also assumes that you have downloaded, or otherwise loaded, the installation package (*notebox.ipk*) onto your computer hard drive.

Attach the card reader to your computer if it is not already attached. Insert a card with at least 100KB of free space into the card reader. Copy the installation package onto the card. Remove the card from the card reader.

Insert the card into the Zaurus, according to Sharp's instructions. Navigate to the utilities screen (the tabbed pane with the wrench icon in the home area) and launch the "Add/Remove Software" application. Click the "install package" button. NoteBox should appear as an option to install. Tap it, and then follow any instructions that follow. NoteBox is now installed and ready to use! (Note that, for most installations, the NoteBox launch item will appear in the Jeode screen, which is the tabbed pane with the weird red and black, circle-ish icon.)

General Concepts

The Zaurus is perhaps the perfect platform for taking notes. It's small enough to carry anywhere, and easy to bring into meetings, classrooms, etc. In fact, most users probably already bring their Zauruses with them in order to access calendar events, contact information, etc. The attached keyboard lets the user quickly enter lots of textual data. And the memory options allow for plenty of notes to be stored and archived.

Unfortunately, there haven't been any applications that are well-suited for taking notes on the Zaurus. Sure, there are various text editors that run on the device. But after taking notes for just a couple of meetings, management of the notes becomes quite cumbersome indeed. One must either store notes in individual files, making reviewing notes and searching for information difficult or downright impossible, or keep notes in a single, enormous file, which makes reviews and information searches even **more** difficult.

That's where NoteBox steps in. NoteBox is designed from the ground up as a note-taking platform. It allows notes to be stored and retrieved logically and intuitively. Instead of storing notes as files, you store them according to date, topic, or title. Notes can be retrieved across any of those parameters, allowing you, for example, to review all notes from all meetings with Client X regarding the design of their intranet, or notes from all Staff Meetings held over the past month.

The editor is also designed for quick, efficient data entry, avoiding unnecessary superfluous features, and providing other useful features such as auto-indent and auto-bullets for lists.

What is a note?

A note simply refers to the information you enter that relates to a single meeting, class session, or other event. Every note has the following attributes:

Date

The first is the date item. By default, notes are saved with their created date stored, allowing you to later retrieve your notes based on the day they were taken. If desired, you can change the date associated with a particular note. Notes can easily span multiple days; however, by default, the date on which they are **created** is stored.

Topic

Notes are also stored by topic. Topic may mean slightly different things to different users, but in general, they refer to some overall grouping that notes can fall under. For example, if you are a freelance worker, you might create a topic for each of your clients. If you work for a large company, you might create a different topic for every project team you belong to. Those who run smaller companies might create separate topics for functions like “Finance”, “Marketing”, etc. If you are a student, you might create separate topics for each of your classes.

Description

Description simply refers to the title you give to a particular note. It should briefly describe the purpose of the meeting or event for which you created the note. Examples might be “February Budget Planning”, “Network Outage Emergency Meeting”, or “Biology Midterm Cram Session.”

And, of course, the real “meat” of every note will be the information that you enter.

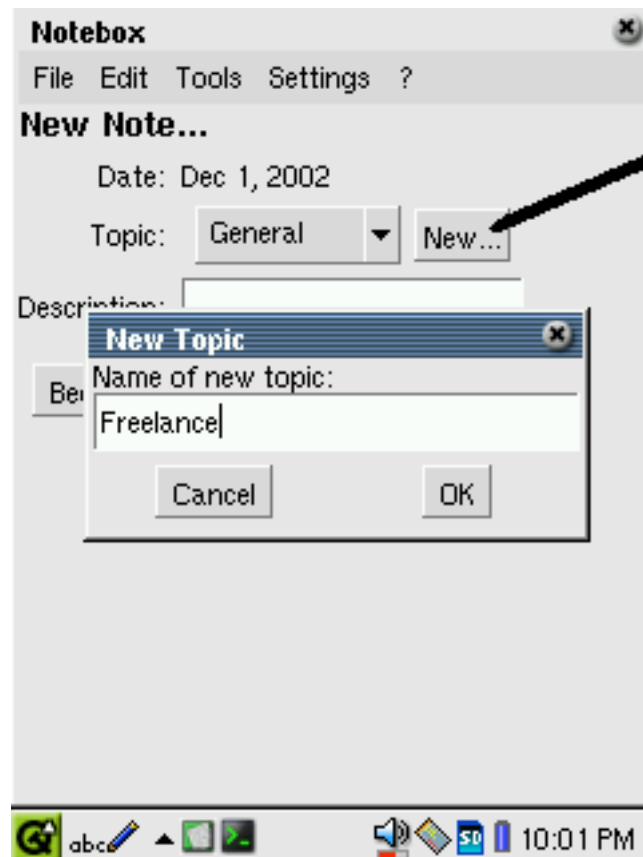
General Use

NoteBox contains four screens from which you can begin using it. Any of these screens can be accessed from the *File* menu.

New Note...

This is the first screen that you will see upon launching NoteBox. It is where you first create a note, entering its attributes. You'll notice that the current date is provided in the *Date* field. If you need to change the date, simply tap the current date with your stylus and create the correct date in the resulting popup window.

You'll also notice a pulldown list of topics in the *Topic* field. If you need to enter a new topic (for example, if you are using NoteBox for the first time and haven't yet entered any topics) you can do so by clicking the *New...* button. A popup window will appear, allowing you to enter the name of a new topic. After entering the name of the new topic and clicking *OK*, the new topic will appear in the pulldown list. Just select the name of that topic—or whatever topic is desired—from the list.



Enter a new topic by clicking *New...* and typing the new topic's name into the resultant dialog.

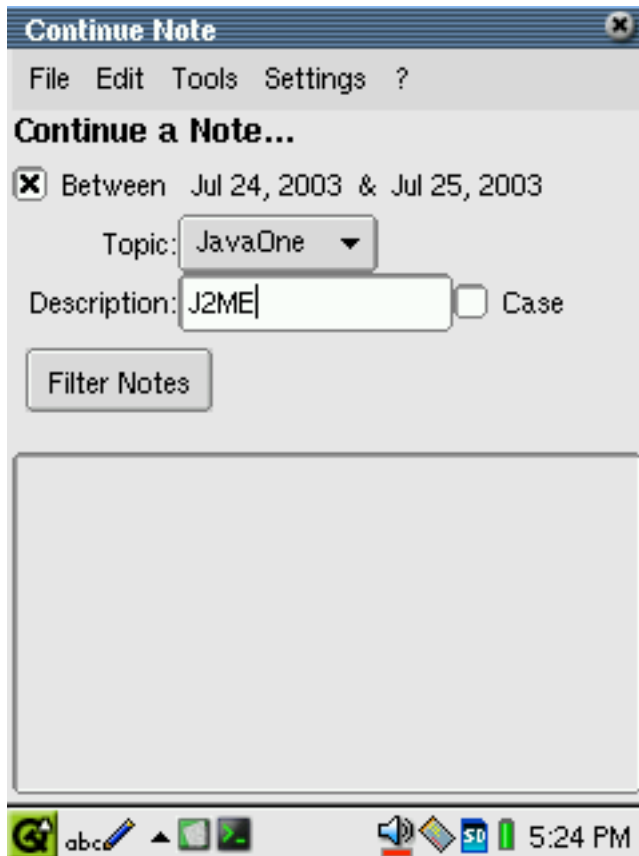
There is also a *Description* field, in which you should enter the unique, descriptive name of this particular note. Once you've done that, just click *Begin Taking Notes* to start taking notes.

Continue Note...

This screen allows you to resume entering data for a note that you've already begun. To help you find the note you're looking for, this screen allows you to filter notes according to various criteria. If you know the general date range during which the note was created, use the *Between* row. First, ensure the checkbox is selected. Then, ensure that the first date label displays the "from" date, or the earliest date that filtered notes can have been created. Similarly, ensure that the second date label displays to "to" date, or the latest date that filtered notes can have been created. To change the dates from the defaults given, simply tap the dates with the stylus and enter the desired dates in the resulting popup windows.

To filter your notes according to topic, simply select the desired topic from the provided pulldown menu. If you don't wish to filter by topic, leave the pulldown menu set to *-any-*.

You can also filter your notes based on words contained in the description. To do this, simply enter some text in the *Description* field that must appear in the descriptions of filtered notes. You do not need to enter the entire description in that field to make a match. For example, entering "Budget" into the field would match notes with the following descriptions: "Budget", "Budget Planning", and "2003 Budget Planning Meeting." Select the *case* checkbox if you want the description to be matched exactly according to your capitalization; leave it unselected if you want a case-insensitive description search.



Once you've entered your filtering criteria and clicking *Filter Notes*, all notes that match your criteria will appear in the bottom frame. In this example, all notes in the *JavaOne* topic, with the exact text "J2ME" (or, "j2me", "J2me", etc) in the description, will be selected when *Filter Notes* is clicked.

Once you've entered the appropriate filtering criteria, click the *Filter Notes* button. A list of matching notes will appear in the bottom frame. You can refine your filtering criteria and re-click the button as often as necessary. Once you've found your desired note, simply tap its name in the bottom frame to continue editing it.

View Notes...

This screen allows you to view, in one document, a combination of notes based on the criteria you set. In this way, you can quickly peruse all notes that, for example, were taken on a certain day or during a certain week, belong to a certain topic, have a certain word in the description, or any combination thereof.

Filtering is done in the same manner as described in the *Continue Note...* section above. The difference with *View Notes...* is that once you've set your filtering criteria, you click the *View Notes* button to view—in a read-only, non-editable screen—all of the notes that match your filter criteria.

Delete Notes...

If your notes have been piling up and you need to prune out a few outdated ones, use the *Delete Notes...* screen. Here, you can filter notes in the same manner as described in the “Continue Notes...” section. Once you enter your filter criteria and click the *Filter Notes* button, you will see a list of matching notes in the bottom frame. To delete one of the notes listed, simply tap the name of the desired note and answer “Yes” to the resulting dialog box.

Editing Notes

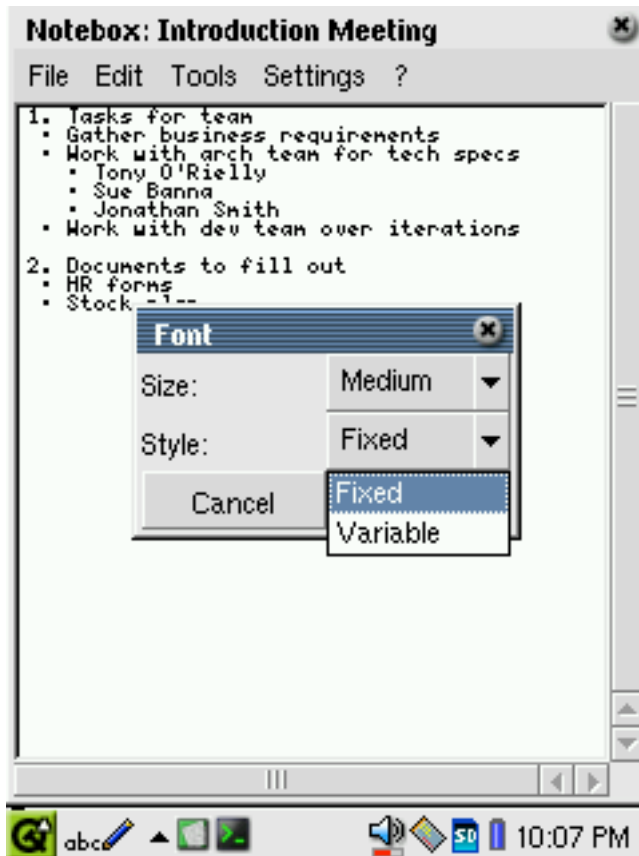
Once you've created a new note, or recalled an existing note (as described in the previous section) you will be presented with a screen in which to edit notes. Editing notes is fairly straightforward; simply type into the main text window.

Lists

Since the creation of lists is common in notetaking, 2-level auto-bulleted lists are provided for you. To create a list item, simply hold the shift key down when adding a line-break. A new line will be created, prepended with a bullet point. At this point, the bullet represents a first-level list item, indented once. To make the bullet a second-level list item, simply press the tab key. Subsequent presses of the tab key will toggle the list item between first- and second-levels. (Note that for tab-key-toggling of list item levels to function, the cursor must be placed one space **after** the bullet point. By default, the cursor is placed there when the bullet is first created.)

Font Settings

You can control your font settings using the Settings->Font menu item. Selecting this menu item brings up a dialog box in which you can select the font style (fixed-width or variable-width) and relative font size. The general advantage to a fixed-width font is legibility, while the advantage to using a variable-width font is that, generally, more characters can fit into the screen.



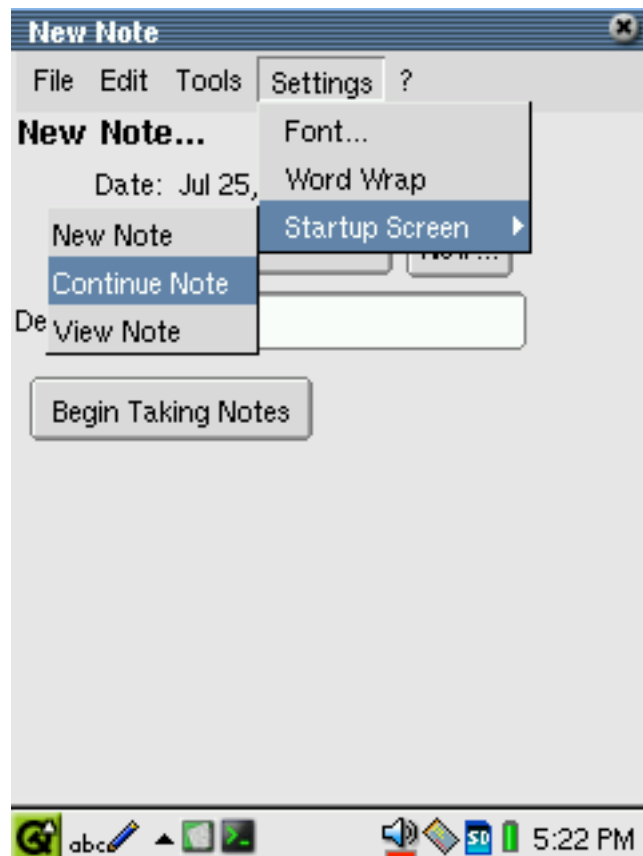
Font settings can be set in the editor.

Word Wrap

The Settings->Word Wrap menu checkbox item allows you to control whether or not text automatically wraps to a new line when you enter it. Note that you must restart NoteBox for this change to take effect.

Startup Screen

When selected, the Settings->Startup Screen menu item displays three options: *New Note*, *Continue Note*, and *View Note*. This selection determines which screen will display whenever Notebox launches., for example, you want the *Continue Note* screen to appear whenever you launch Notebox, select Settings->Startup Screen->Continue Note.



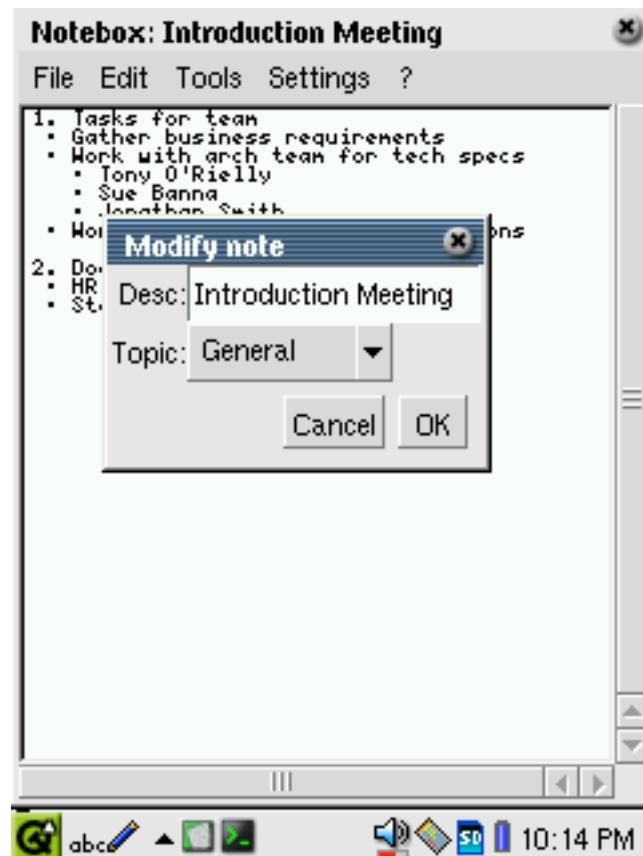
Use the *Settings* -> *Startup Screen* options to select which screen you want NoteBox to first display. In this example, the next time NoteBox is launched, the user will be greeted with the *Continue Note* screen.

Editing Features

NoteBox also provides standard text editing features in the *Edit* menu. This includes undoing the last operation via the *Undo XXX* menu item; searching for a text string with the *Find* menu item (either case-sensitive or case-insensitive); searching for subsequent instances of the text string with *Find Again*; and cutting, copying and pasting text with *Cut*, *Copy*, and *Paste*.

Modifying Attributes

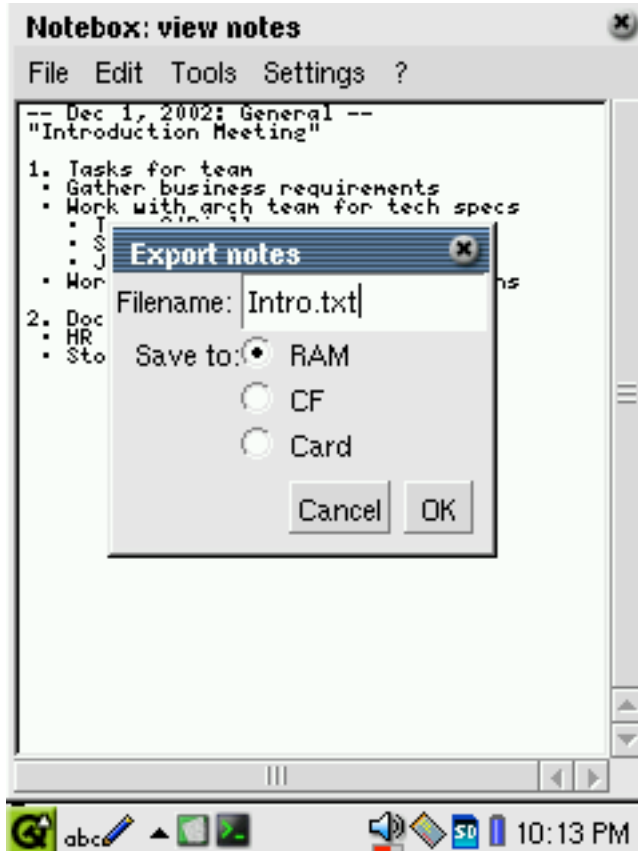
When you are editing a note, you can change the notes description and topic by selecting *Tools* -> *Note Details*. A popup window will appear, allowing you to change the note's existing description and/or select a new topic to associate with the note.



Note attributes can easily be modified at any time.

Exporting Notes

You can easily export your notes to a text file when you are in View Notes or Edit Notes mode. Simply select *File -> Export*. A popup window will appear, asking you what you would like to name the resulting file, and whether you want to save the file to your Zaurus's internal memory (RAM), Compact Flash card (CF), or Secure Digital card (Card.) Enter a filename, select a storage location, and click *OK*.



Notes can be exported to internal RAM, Compact Flash, or Secure Digital Card from any view/edit screen.

Registration

NoteBox is distributed as shareware, which means that it is not free. You are allowed to download and try out the software, but if you continue using it, you are expected to pay a nominal fee. NoteBox will allow you to take only a limited number of notes until you pay the fee and register your copy. Registration information can be found at <http://www.taubler.com/notebox>,